

FORM B – BUILDING

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125



Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

0064000128

Boston N.

735, 736

Town Lexington

Place (neighborhood or village)

Address 63 Hancock St.

Historic Name Dr. Robert Fiske House

Uses: Present Residential

Original Residential

Date of Construction 1732

Source Hudson

Style/Form Georgian

Architect/Builder

Exterior Material:

Foundation Granite

Wall/Trim Wood Clapboard

Roof Asphalt Shingle

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures Barn

Major Alterations (with dates)

Rear additions, bay window, porch, Greek Revival and Colonial Revival finishes (dates unknown)

Condition Good

Moved ☒ no ☐ yes Date

Acreage 1.4 A.

Setting On a busy residential street in a neighborhood of primarily 20th-century houses



Recorded by Nancy S. Seasholes

Organization Lexington Historical Commission

Date (month / year) February 1998

Follow Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey Manual instructions for completing this form.

BUILDING FORM

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION ☐ see continuation sheet

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

Of the 21 Georgian houses still standing in Lexington, 63 Hancock St. (MHC #735) is the only one with a gambrel roof and, despite additions and alterations, is also still quite intact. The original house is rectangular, 2½ stories, five-by-two bays, and has a side gambrel roof with a curb and an off-center ridge chimney. It is set on a granite foundation, clad with wood clapboards, and roofed with asphalt shingles. At the rear is a 1½-story front-gabled addition on a fieldstone foundation; on the west elevation of this addition is a one-story shed-roofed addition on a cut fieldstone foundation. The center entrance in the main block has a pedimented entry surround with decorative sidelights, which appears to be Colonial Revival, and windows are 6/6 double hung sash. Other ornamental finishes include the pilastered cornerboards, which are apparently Greek Revival. The porch that wraps around the east and rear elevations has a wide molded cornice, Tuscan posts, and a Chippendale-like rail. It was apparently added in the Colonial Revival era as was the one-story three-sided bay window on the west elevation. Like the house, the barn (MHC #736) is also clad with wood clapboards and roofed with asphalt shingles. It is side-gabled and has an off-center sliding barn door, a center hay door, and a greenhouse on the south elevation.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE ☐ see continuation sheet

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

The plaque on the exterior of this house reads, "Built 1732—House of Joseph Fisk [sic] who attended the wounded April 19, 1775 and served in the Continental Army as surgeon throughout the war," all of which may be true except that, since Joseph Fiske was born in 1726 (d. 1808), he obviously didn't build a house in 1732 although he did live in it. The house was probably actually built by Joseph's father, Robert (1680–1752), also a doctor. The 1732 construction date comes from Hudson, who does not cite his source. The Fiskes were some of the earliest 17th-century settlers in Lexington and by the 19th century were located primarily on East St. This house remained in the Fiske family until 1854.

In 1854 this house was purchased by Joseph F. Simonds, who had recently sold his family's large farm on Burlington St. (9 Burlington St., MHC #742) and built the original part of the house at 53 Hancock St. (MHC #730). A member of a family that had also been in Lexington since the 17th century, Simonds was known as "Old Fred" and served as a selectman and as an assessor for many years until his death in 1897. A ca. 1891 photograph of the house shows it without the porch.

BIBLIOGRAPHY and/or REFERENCES ☐ see continuation sheet

Clippings book. "Hancock St." Scrapbook of late 1940s–early 1950s clippings from *Lexington Minute-man*. In possession of Nancy S. Seasholes, Lexington, Mass.

Hudson, Charles. *History of the Town of Lexington*. Revised and continued to 1912 by the Lexington Historical Society. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913. 2: 210, 212, 627.

Lexington Historical Society. *Lexington. A Hand-book of Its Points of Interest, Historical and Picturesque*. Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Historical Society, 1891. 51.

Sileo, Thomas. "Who Built the Fiske House and Why?" *Lexington Minuteman*, 12 Oct. 1995.

☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. *If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.*